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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan

Report of the Secretary-General*

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1	2
II.	Current situation in Tajikistan and the role of the United Nations political presence in the country	2–7	2
III.	Current economic situation	8–9	2
IV.	Humanitarian operations	10–57	3
V.	Assistance provided by Member States	58–59	11
VI.	Observations	60–63	11

* The late submission of the report is due to developments in the situation in Tajikistan.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/45 of 27 November 2000, by which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in Tajikistan and to report to it at its fifty-sixth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution. The report covers the period from 15 July 2000 to 15 July 2001.

II. Current situation in Tajikistan and role of the United Nations political presence in the country

2. Tajikistan has come a long way in consolidating peace and stability. However, the road has been marked by setbacks and problems that are rooted in the civil conflict. Some of those problems have not been fully addressed during the transitional period. First of all, they are related to the existence of small non-reintegrated armed groups of the former United Tajik Opposition, particularly in the Karategin Valley. While facing the security challenges posed by these groups, including rural banditry and hostage-taking, the Government has had to resort to force on some occasions while continuing its efforts, through ad hoc commissions, to facilitate their reintegration into governmental power structures or civilian life.

3. The overall situation in the country is further complicated by the extreme poverty of the population, the destruction brought about by the civil war and the collapse of the social security, public health care, sanitation and educational systems. Furthermore, the country has been severely affected over the past two years by a severe drought. Tajikistan has appealed to the international community for urgent additional humanitarian assistance. The country is also suffering from internal security problems caused by organized crime, the presence of a significant amount of illegal arms among the civilian population, corruption and large-scale drug trafficking.

4. Despite numerous obstacles, Tajikistan has demonstrated a firm commitment to peace and stability and has made substantial progress. Tajik society needs and deserves encouragement and material assistance in its efforts to consolidate peace and to promote post-conflict stability and democracy. Such support is vital to preventing social discontent and the recurrence of civil disorder.

5. The main provisions of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (A/52/219-S/1997/510, annex I) were implemented by May 2000 and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan was terminated on 15 May 2000. To help address the deep-seated problems that led to civil conflict in the country, the Secretary-General, with the concurrence of the Government of Tajikistan and the Security Council, established the United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peace-building (UNTOP). The new office was entrusted with a mandate to provide the political framework and leadership for post-conflict peace-building activities of the United Nations system in the country.

6. Organizations of the United Nations system in Tajikistan have been making persistent efforts to mobilize international support for targeted programmes within the overall peace-building framework. These efforts showed concrete results at the consultative group meeting of donor countries, held at Tokyo on 16 May 2001. The US$ 430 million in pledges made at that meeting have raised hopes for peace, stability and development in Tajikistan.

7. Based on a comprehensive peace-building strategy, UNTOP, together with the organizations of the United Nations system in Tajikistan, will focus its activities on the consolidation of peace, national recovery and reconstruction, promotion of the rule of law and strengthening of democratic institutions, and provisions of support for local human rights initiatives.

III. Current economic situation

8. Tajikistan has suffered from a severe drought over the past two years, which has severely compounded the economic problems created by several years of civil conflict that resulted in destruction of the basic social and economic infrastructure and a sharp decline in living standards. The nation's major economic assets include vast water resources, which are generally scarce in Central Asia, cotton, facilities for the processing of imported aluminium ore, and some deposits of gold and semi-precious stones. Unfavourable agricultural incentives, use of the limited resources for other purposes and weak administrative

capacity have contributed to the steep economic decline of the country, pushing over 80 per cent of the population below the poverty line. High rates of unemployment, in particular among young people, the non-functioning of the national safety net system, scarce opportunities for private investment, declining domestic production and other financial, cultural and criminal factors have contributed to political instability. The country may be added to the list of heavily indebted poor countries for inclusion in the global debt relief effort.

9. Although the economy showed positive signs during 2000 and early 2001, the continued drought and diminishing purchasing power have pushed large groups of the population into extreme poverty. The worsening situation in rural areas and a large caseload of rural and urban vulnerable groups has led to continued reliance on international relief assistance. Wage labour, remittances, assistance provided by international organizations, trade and drug trafficking constitute the major sources of income. However, the Government continues to make efforts to reduce poverty by increasing support to social sectors, accounting now for 20 per cent of public expenditure.

IV. Humanitarian operations

A. General

10. Despite significant improvements in peace and security during the past year, the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate owing to the prevailing drought, severe economic conditions and insufficient livelihoods for over one half of the Tajik population. The drought in 2000 created food insecurity for 1.2 million people who relied on food assistance provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and other international organizations, such as the Agha Khan Foundation, German Agro Action, Care International, Mercy Corps International, Save the Children, Mission Øst and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

11. Food production continues to follow the declining trend of the past several years. In 2000, cereal production was estimated to be 46 per cent less than the level of 1999, which was 17 per cent less than the level of 1998. This decline has been caused by severe drought, deteriorating irrigation facilities and a lack of resources for essential agricultural input. In 2001, the drought caused yet another crop failure in many parts of the country. On 23 May 2001, the President of Tajikistan appealed to the United Nations and several major donor countries for humanitarian assistance to address the consequences of the drought. A crop assessment mission of WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) visited the country between 21 June and 3 July, and recently published its findings (for details, see www.reliefweb.int). Targeted food assistance is recommended for about 1 million people, requiring 90,500 metric tonnes of food aid, particularly for those living in remote mountainous areas.

12. Despite the efforts made by the international community to rehabilitate health-care facilities, health care remains sub-standard throughout the country. Local authorities rely on basic drugs provided by international organizations. In remote districts many health centres lack essential medicines and qualified medical professionals. Health facilities are unable to control or treat diseases such as typhoid, malaria, tuberculosis, dysentery, brucellosis, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS. Access to other basic social services, such as water, sanitation and education, has been limited by the absence of essential supplies and proper maintenance. Social services employees in many parts of the country go for months without receiving their salaries, which in any event are not enough to cover their basic daily requirements. Education continues to decline owing to the inability of the Government or parents to provide basic supplies, funds for school maintenance or heating in winter; or provide clothing and shoes to the children. Safe drinking water is not available in the most of the country, including in some urban areas, and health care remains sub-standard in the country areas where only 35 per cent of the population has access to piped water. Water distribution systems are weak or non-existent in most rural areas. At Dushanbe, the natural gas supply has been cut for the past few months, while the drinking water supply was also not available in town several times this year.

13. The funding of humanitarian assistance was poor in the past year, especially for important sectors such as health, education and water and sanitation. The donor response to the 2001 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan has been discouraging, representing approximately 36 per cent of the total

requirements as at 30 June; most of the contributions were for the emergency food aid activities of WFP. Although humanitarian agencies devote much of their resources to life-saving and stabilization activities, they have also been supporting rehabilitation projects aimed at revitalizing communities and restoring basic infrastructure despite serious funding difficulties. In the Khatlon and Sugd regions, and direct rule districts, hundreds of schools, hospitals, clinics, irrigation facilities, electricity systems, bridges and roads have been rehabilitated. In the Gorno-Badakshan oblast, WFP and a number of non-governmental organizations have been providing humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to local communities.

14. In general, the operating environment for the United Nations and international organizations has improved slightly over the past year, although recent insecurity has limited the number of accessible areas of the country. Relationships between the humanitarian community and the Government tend to be good, although restrictions and delays in the issuance of visas and travel permits have caused occasional concern.

15. The reintegration of ex-combatants and the creation of job opportunities for demobilized fighters is still a big challenge to both the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations system. In view of the fragility of the situation, the increased criminalization of society and the reduced number of income opportunities, it is important that employment opportunities be created in order to support Tajik society and strengthen the achievements of the peace-building process.

16. The United Nations Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, supported by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, continues to lead the coordination of humanitarian activities in Tajikistan. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for the overall direction of the humanitarian programmes, including policy formulation on key issues and in supporting the link between emergency and rehabilitation activities. The United Nations agencies are directly responsible for leading sectoral coordination efforts. In response to the drought of the past two years, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations agencies have alerted donors and the media to the threat posed by the drought. The Office facilitated the preparation of the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan for 2001 and its mid-term review. It also coordinated the development of a contingency plan for the Tajikistan part of the Ferghana Valley and the preparation of a national contingency plan for emergency preparedness and response. On 28 and 29 June 2001, the Office organized a workshop on the consolidated appeals process for some 37 participants representing United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, non-governmental organizations and resident donor organizations. The purpose was to evaluate the current developments in Tajikistan, analyse possible scenarios for 2002 and identify key priority areas of intervention.

B. Security developments affecting humanitarian relief efforts

17. The security situation in Tajikistan improved considerably during the second half of 2000, although killings by criminal groups and small armed clashes continued in the eastern part of the country. Other criminal activities, such as robbery, forced entry into apartments, kidnapping for ransom, and drug trafficking, also continued throughout the reporting period. Several explosions occurred in different parts of the country, such as the October 2000 bombing of the Korean Church at Dushanbe, which killed 8 people and injured 46 others. Similar explosions struck two other churches over the new year. On 5 April 2001, an explosion occurred in a shopping centre close to the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), killing one person and injuring several others.

18. The 11 April 2001 assassination at Dushanbe of the Deputy Minister of Interior, Habib Sanginov, negatively affected the security situation in the country. Following this incident and the killing of three police personnel on 25 April, the situation in the Romit Valley and Kofarnihon districts to the east of Dushanbe became more tense. Some 15 humanitarian staff members, including 3 expatriates, of the non-governmental organization German Agro Action were taken hostage on 15 June 2001 in the Tavildara district of the Karategin Valley. They were released unharmed on 17 June after the intervention of senior governmental officials. On 22 June, government forces started what they termed "clean up" operation against the armed groups of Rahman Sanginov and his deputy Mansour Mowakalov, former commanders of the United Tajik Opposition. Both were reported as killed in action in early August. In the course of this

operation, some 40 fighters and 9 government soldiers were reported killed. No official information is available on civilian casualties and property destruction. The July assassination of the State Adviser for International Affairs to President Rakhmonov, Karim Yuldashev also underlines the continuing instability in the country.

19. This instability has led to the implementation of further security measures to ensure the safety of United Nations staff in Tajikistan. The main road to Karategin Valley via Kofarnihon is closed for United Nations international personnel, as is the Karategin Valley and the districts of Romit, Kofarnihon, Tavildara, Darband and Faizabad. Another serious security threat facing some sectors of the rural population is that of the unmarked landmines along the Tajik-Uzbek border, which are reported to have killed up to 50 people and injured many others.

20. The law-enforcement agencies of Tajikistan are attempting to address the current levels of criminality by carrying out joint raids against criminals, drug trafficking operations and illegal weapons caches. However, the geographical location of Tajikistan, the current escalation of fighting in Afghanistan and the continuing threat of possible incursions by fighters of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan combine to seriously restrict the Government's ability to address instability.

C. Non-governmental organizations

21. Over 40 international and 100 national non-governmental organizations, together with the Red Cross movement, provide significant amounts of humanitarian assistance in Tajikistan, with emphasis on food and health programmes. The bulk of the emergency medicines distributed to health institutions throughout the country are provided by international non-governmental organizations. The non-governmental community works closely with the United Nations system, through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at Dushanbe, and participates in the sectoral coordination meetings organized and chaired by the relevant United Nations agencies. There is also a monthly coordination meeting of non-governmental organizations, in which the United Nations agencies are represented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

22. The non-governmental community continues to face obstacles from various governmental authorities in the form of demands for tax payments, payments to the social protection fund and customs duties (especially on the monetization of food commodities). The general decline in funding for humanitarian activities in Tajikistan has also affected some of the international non-governmental organizations, causing them to cut back programmes in such priority sectors as agriculture, water and sanitation, health and education.

D. Relief food assistance

23. The drought in 2000, combined with existing economic hardship and deteriorating agricultural infrastructure, put a large segment of the population at risk of food insecurity, in particular those in rural areas and female-headed households. In May 2000, the Government of Tajikistan appealed to the United Nations and five major donors to assist the country in acquiring sufficient food commodities. Pursuant to this request, FAO and WFP conducted a crop and food supply assessment mission which led to the launch of a WFP emergency operation in October 2000 to assist 1.16 million drought-affected people. Owing to the late arrival of food commodities, WFP started the first emergency food distributions in December 2000. The emergency operation was extended until December 2001 to receive and distribute the confirmed contributions that have not yet arrived in the country. Parallel to the emergency operation, WFP continued to implement its protracted relief and recovery operation, which focuses on the country's rehabilitation and development through the provision of support to the agricultural, health and educational sectors. From July 2000 until 30 June 2001, WFP distributed some 46,000 metric tonnes of different food commodities to various categories of beneficiaries, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and national authorities.

24. The support provided by WFP to the agricultural sector focuses on projects to rehabilitate irrigation systems and to better manage land used by the poor; both types of project result in increased household food production. Food-for-work and food-for-training projects were also implemented to improve health conditions in those areas that are regularly affected by malaria or polio.

25. By the end of June 2001, the WFP school feeding programme had reached more than 100,000 children in the Sugd region, Gorno-Badakshan oblast and Gharm district. This programme is intended to improve the nutritional status of children and to promote increased school attendance for girls and boys. Special attention is given to reducing disparities between boys' and girls' enrolment, and ensuring a full presence of teachers at school.

E. Agriculture support

26. In 2000, Tajikistan experienced the lowest precipitation in recent history, which brought cereal production down by over 40 per cent compared with previous years. Cereal output in 2001 is forecast to drop further, to 301,000 metric tonnes. This has led to a serious deterioration in national and household food security in a country that usually meets about one half of its cereal needs through commercial imports and food aid. The 2001/02 cereal import requirement is expected to be approximately 784,000 metric tonnes, of which 400,000 metric tonnes can be commercially imported and 43,000 metric tonnes covered through pledged food aid. This leaves an estimated food gap of 341,000 metric tonnes in the coming year. The reduced availability and quality of seeds, and low snowfall and rainfall in 2001, are among the factors which are likely to result in a dramatically reduced 2001 cereal harvest that will further add to human suffering and poverty in Tajikistan.

27. Humanitarian agencies attempt to support vulnerable farmers by supplying them seeds and tools with the resources made available to them. FAO responded to the 2000 drought by supplying 1,200 poor rural households with quality wheat seeds and fertilizer in October 2000. In 2001, FAO distributed for the first spring planting nine varieties of vegetable seeds, fertilizer, hand tools and planting instructions to 2,500 rural vulnerable households, with the objective of improving household food security and contributing to cash generation through the marketing of agricultural produce. Under the irrigation programme, FAO rehabilitates irrigation infrastructure, primarily benefiting recipients of vegetable seeds and small private farmers. In 2001, irrigation water supply will be renewed and water management substantially improved on some 30,000 hectares of land.

28. In collaboration with the Government and based on FAO experience in other countries, the FAO veterinary programme continues to provide substantial assistance to small livestock owners for improved animal and public health. Over 160 veterinarians have been supported, equipped and trained by FAO to provide veterinary services to some 600,000 animals at highly competitive prices.

29. Urgent assistance is needed for the rehabilitation of the collapsing irrigation infrastructure, the maintenance and renovation of agricultural equipment, production and procurement of appropriate quality cereal seeds, and the establishment of an adequate rural finance system. Without such measures, it is likely that agricultural production will continue to decline regardless of the climatic conditions.

F. Refugee repatriation and support

30. The main objectives of the activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Tajikistan for 2000 were: (a) to complement the peace process by facilitating the safe return of Tajik refugees; (b) to undertake reintegration activities in returnee areas; (c) to protect Afghans and other refugees in Tajikistan and provide the most vulnerable with care and maintenance; and (d) to strengthen the capacity of the Government and non-governmental organizations with regard to refugee-related issues.

31. Between July 2000 and June 2001, 1,835 Tajiks repatriated voluntarily, with UNHCR assistance. The returnees were assisted with transportation and received cash grants. The target of 5,000 repatriations could not be achieved, owing principally to problems of transit through Uzbekistan and a suspension of organized repatriation imposed by the Government of Tajikistan for part of the period after some problems arose in connection with the restoration of property rights. In addition, the drought in Tajikistan made some refugees unwilling to return.

32. Special attention was paid to the capacity-building of Government institutions dealing with refugee issues, national non-governmental organizations and refugee communities. Promotion of refugee law and human rights issues was pursued through training programmes, workshops, conferences and round-table meetings. The United Nations agencies

and international organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Committee of the Red Cross and IFRC assisted with peace-building and human rights monitoring as part of this return process.

33. Activities were undertaken in the water, agriculture, livestock and income-generating sectors to sustain returnees in the area of origin. Hand pumps were installed; fertilizers, seeds and tools were distributed, in addition to the rehabilitation of irrigation pumping stations and 123 kilometres of irrigation canals. A total of 4,713 hectares of land was brought under cultivation, which improved food security for 32,062 returnees, and 188 returnee families were provided with poultry and livestock, improving the welfare of some 1,000 persons. As a result of the drought, harvests were reduced to a level of between 0 and 40 per cent of normal output, necessitating prolonged food support. Regular monitoring and intervention with authorities ensured protection of the social and property rights of the returnees. Women's groups were targeted for income-generation activities through the provision of access to microcredit and of support to handicrafts, as well as protection of their legal rights.

34. A total of 4,638 Afghans in Tajikistan were processed for refugee status determination as at 31 December 2000, but the protection situation for refugees and asylum seekers deteriorated to a large extent during 2000. In a bid to combat criminality and drug trafficking, the Government introduced restrictive legislation on asylum and refugee movements in the form of Decrees Nos. 323 and 325. Under these measures, the Government sought to relocate refugees habitually residing in 30 urban areas, and to deny the opportunity of asylum to refugees entering through neighbouring countries. UNHCR closely monitored this situation and is still engaged in negotiation with the Government for the reversal of the decrees. In helping the Government with its legislative process, UNHCR has provided comments on a draft revision to the Refugee Law of 1996, and is still in discussion with the Government with a view to improving certain areas of the draft revision that do not meet international standards.

35. As a result of continued fighting in Afghanistan, about 10,000 Afghans sought refuge on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan on the flood plains of the river Pyanj. UNHCR and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs have coordinated inter-agency assistance consisting of shelter, clothing, household items and food to this population, with the active support of non-governmental organizations.

G. Health and nutrition

36. The general deterioration of socio-economic conditions and health services as a result of five years of civil conflict, as well as frequent natural disasters, has resulted in an extremely precarious national health status, particularly in rural areas. Also, the limited state budget for health (US$ 1.50 per capita) can barely support the basic functioning of the health-care system. The population, including vulnerable groups, must now pay for most medical services, including costly medications that had been previously distributed free of charge. This has resulted in the exclusion of a large proportion of the population from adequate medical care. For instance, in Tajikistan, 42.1 per cent of child deliveries (90 per cent in rural areas) take place at home without proper supervision.

37. Basic health indicators show that Tajikistan has a poorer health status than most middle-income and even some lower-income countries. Despite some progress during the past few years, the levels of infant mortality (19.4 per 1,000 live births) and maternal mortality (53 per 100,000 live births) remain 2 to 4 times higher than levels in European countries. The reported drop in mortality rates during the past year is not completely reliable owing to incomplete medical registration processes, limited by high administrative fees and the unsatisfactory introduction throughout the country of the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the registration of live births. During the past decade, a sharp decrease of life expectancy at birth (-3.2 years) has been calculated. Europeans now live, on average, more than 10 years longer than do Tajiks. Seventeen per cent of children in Tajikistan suffer from acute malnutrition, while stunted growth in many of the drought-affected areas such as Khatlon oblast (Shaartuz and Kabodion districts) is typically over 40 per cent. Anaemia is common among children and especially among lactating and pregnant women. The number of anaemia cases in 2000 amounted to 81,935, an increase of 15 per cent as compared to 1999. A similar rate of increase (15.5 per cent) was registered for iodine deficiency disorders.

38. Acute health concerns during 2000 were mostly related to the prevention and control of epidemics of malaria, typhoid fever, dysentery, anthrax, brucellosis, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted diseases, among others. Insufficient knowledge within the population on the prevention and spread of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV remains a problem, especially among young drug users (18,000 at Dushanbe alone). At present, 22 cases are registered as HIV-positive.

39. The unsatisfactory epidemiological situation is further exacerbated by the continuing drought. Rodents have migrated into more highly populated areas such as Dushanbe, increasing the danger of plague. Anthrax outbreaks are reported in Khatlon oblast and the direct rule districts. The anthrax and brucellosis incidence in Tajikistan shows continuous growth (125 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively, between 1999 and 2000), and is much higher than that in other Central Asian countries. The overall reported incidence of malaria increased by 41 per cent over the past year owing to unusual climatic conditions favouring transmission of this disease.

40. The international community has been giving health assistance to Tajikistan for several years, and some positive results have been obtained. The country has managed to achieve high immunization coverage for polio (96 per cent), diphtheria/polio/tetanus (96 per cent) and measles (92 per cent) as well as increased detection of cases of flaccid paralyses. It has also coped with dangerous outbreaks of malaria and typhoid. Tajikistan has embarked on a progressive and comprehensive health-care reform process, involving all areas of the health-care system. A number of significant developments have taken place in strengthening primary health care, women's and children's care, control of communicable diseases, and medical education.

41. With the support of the European Commission Humanitarian Office for some projects, who has continued to provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Health in the preparation of a renewed strategy for Tajikistan on health protection, elaboration of an essential drug list concept, preparation of training curricula for family medicine and retraining of local staff in pilot zones of health-care reform, fellowships, strengthening the reproductive health management information system, promoting effective prenatal care, polio control, development of a national disaster preparedness plan, and implementation of the national environmental health action plan. A food-for-work programme organized by WHO, WFP and the Ministry of Health for 6,535 volunteers in malaria control and polio eradication was completed during 2000.

42. Technical assistance has been provided by WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the national health-care system in relation to the drought. UNICEF provided technical assistance and training of health workers on essential obstetrics, newborn care and breastfeeding. Twenty maternity hospitals have been provided with basic maternity equipment. UNICEF continued strengthening the expanded programme of immunization through supplies of vaccines, cold chain equipment and injectable materials.

43. The nutritional programme has been greatly expanded in Tajikistan in all of its three components of iodine deficiency, anaemia, and breastfeeding. For the past three years, UNICEF has supplied potassium iodite for salt iodization. With the support of UNICEF, communication and public information materials on prevention of iodine deficiency disorders were elaborated and printed. In 2000, two maternity hospitals were certified as baby friendly hospitals.

44. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is supporting the Ministry of Health in strengthening reproductive health information and services (preparation of clinical protocols, maternal and prenatal death audit, in-service training, gender-sensitive information campaigns, supply of computers and office equipment). The population and development strategies programme of UNFPA is aimed at strengthening institutional and technical capacities to formulate population policies and to integrate population and gender issues in national and multisectoral development plans and programmes.

H. Provision of support to women's initiatives in peace-building and national reconciliation

45. Women are vulnerable in Tajikistan for two main reasons: the violence that they have experienced during the civil war and the strong patriarchal tradition which has reasserted itself over the past decade despite the Constitution and other legal provisions. Unwritten law influences gender relations, limiting the vital space of

women, creating room for human rights violations and justifying the exclusion of women from decision-making.

46. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has been supporting the enhanced participation of women in social and political life and the sustainability of peace, democracy and gender equality in Tajikistan. UNIFEM has established a training centre at Dushanbe to focus on gender and violence against women and psychological rehabilitation. A qualified team of gender trainers has been set up and a national non-governmental organization focused on training and social work has been created and funded by UNIFEM. Some 200 training seminars have been organized in close collaboration with local authorities and local non-governmental organizations in three provinces, reaching 3,577 trainees (3,221 women and 356 men) and 260 local trainers. At present, seminars on gender and violence against women are being held in the 140 subdistricts of the Khatlon region, where 2,240 women and men will receive training. If funds are available, the next step will be to organize seminars at the village level, which is critical to addressing Tajik society at its roots.

47. A 60-page booklet on trafficking of women in Tajikistan has been published in Tajik and Russian. A conference on trafficking of women in Tajikistan was held at the UNIFEM training centre, in collaboration with IOM and OSCE. The participants proposed amendments to existing legislation and the adoption of a new article on trafficking in women in the Tajik Criminal Code that was forwarded to the Tajik Parliament. UNIFEM is implementing another subproject to raise awareness and provide information on the New Family Code of Tajikistan.

I. Water and sanitation

48. UNICEF helped over 300 schools and health facilities to improve their water supply and sanitation facilities, with more than 90,000 direct beneficiaries. Over 200 teachers were trained on hygiene education. In addition, a number of international non-governmental organization carried out small-scale to medium-scale water supply and sanitation activities in various parts of the country. The UNDP Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Programme has been rehabilitating water supply facilities in several parts of the country. A WHO mission visited Tajikistan from 10 to 17 January 2001 to assess the quality and national supply of drinking water.

J. Education

49. The significant attainments of the past are under threat, as the downward trend in school attendance continued. According to multi-indicator cluster surveys, 7 per cent of those between 8 and 10 years of age were not attending school, and only 94 per cent of those who started grade 1 finished grade 5. The *World Education Report 2000*[1] indicates a sharp increase in dropouts, especially among girls at grades 7-9 (28 per cent), much lower rates of secondary school enrolment among girls and a decline of enrolment in primary schools, again especially among girls. This is caused by a lack of schooling materials, clothing, qualified teaching and learning equipment, the low salary of teachers and the poor physical conditions of schools. Many schools have not been repaired for a long time, while the majority of schools do not provide food and heating during the winter. The Ministry of Education reports that only 4.1 per cent of all children of pre-school age are able to receive any form of early childhood education, and the figure is only 1 per cent in rural areas. The support provided by UNICEF to education has therefore continued to focus on the provision of basic school supplies to the most needy children and schools, and the provision of desks and plastic window sheeting to schools and boarding facilities in rural areas.

K. Child protection

50. The number of State institutions for orphans, disabled children and children from poor families increased to 53 in 2000. All of them are substantially underfunded and lack qualified teachers, psychologists, social workers, heating and proper management. A majority of children suffered during the conflict, either directly or indirectly, and many need attention and assistance. More than 8,000 children under 16 years of age are suffering from some form of disability. UNICEF has supported governmental and non-governmental initiatives to reduce the number of children in long-term institutional care and has conducted studies on street children, children in institutions and violence against children. UNICEF

provides children in institutions with basic supplies, development and didactic games, toys, sports goods etc. UNICEF has also supported a national review of legislature and laws, as well as training of trainers on international standards, while supporting the juvenile justice reform.

L. Rehabilitation and development

51. Operating in three of the four regions of Tajikistan, the UNDP Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Development Programme (RRDP) has made significant contributions to the social and economic recovery of each of these regions. Under the Programme, 759 subprojects have been initiated, with 593 completed and 166 ongoing at a total cost of $11,505,485, in the fields of health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, water development, gender in development, shelter, institution-building and capacity-building, visibility, energy, small and medium enterprises and income generation. Taking advantage of the generous support provided by UNDP for the management costs and the very substantial programme delivery base established via UNDP-funded projects, third-party donors have been attracted to RRDP. The programme delivery capacity at the area level, and the structures developed for priority setting and decision-making, were a significant factor in the decision of the Asian Development Bank to use the RRDP programme delivery capacity and mechanisms for the implementation of its US$ 20 million social sector rehabilitation project.

52. In all of its areas of operation, RRDP is contributing to the consolidation of peace. Through the reintegration programme, short-term employment opportunities have been provided to 3,553 ex-combatants, encouraging their reintegration into the community and assisting in peace-building efforts. In addition, 1,000 ex-combatants have gained permanent employment to date. These outcomes were endorsed by local commanders in the Gharm area, who noted that, for example, some ex-combatants did not get involved with destabilizing activities in the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border area because they had become more rooted in their communities.

53. At present, UNDP is reorienting RRDP to take into account the changed political, economic and security environment in Tajikistan. In the future, RRDP will support political and economic stabilization in Tajikistan through development and conflict-prevention activities. In order to rehabilitate the many communities whose social fabric has been torn by war and economic crises, RRDP will assist in small projects for the rehabilitation of social infrastructure, especially in the fields of drinking water, social and youth centres and community environment, which will help to recreate a sense of community and common responsibility.

54. Initiatives in support of local economic development will focus largely on the agricultural sector, since it is the only sector capable of growing significantly in the near future and providing significant employment opportunities in rural areas. This focus on agriculture stresses the rehabilitation of strategic productive infrastructure, especially of irrigation and drainage systems that can be shown to benefit the largest number of people per unit cost. Assistance will be provided for the development of small and micro-enterprises, farmers' organizations, business advisory services and similar institutions that provide farmers with support (credit and other input) and a forum for expression of their needs and concerns.

55. Work will continue with local government to strengthen its capacity to take over many of the functions and develop the skills that now reside largely with the staff of RRDP. The second phase of RRDP will assist, on a pilot basis, the development of an improved capacity for spatial and/or territorial planning at the regional level. Key institutions developed under the first phase of RRDP, especially the district development advisory committees, tender committees and (in Gharm) Jamoat (district council) development committees will be formalized within the local governmental and community structures.

M. Drug control and abuse

56. Drug trafficking has become a lucrative business in Tajikistan, owing to its proximity to Afghanistan and its relative social and political volatility. The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention estimates that a significant and increasing proportion of Afghan opium, morphine and heroin is smuggled through Central Asia, mainly through the 1,700-kilometre border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and then onward to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation. Although some drugs are absorbed locally along the routes, the final

destination of the bulk of the narcotics is Europe and, to some extent, the United States of America. The Tajik authorities are making efforts to strengthen their drug control capacity by establishing a special drug control agency, strengthening border control by the Tajik border forces and providing assistance to the Russian Federal Border forces deployed along a section of the Tajik-Afghan border. The Presidential Drug Control Agency was officially opened on 20 October 2000 and was attended by the Prime Minister, diplomatic representatives and senior United Nations officials.

57. During the period from July 2000 to June 2001, 8,996 kilograms of drugs were seized on Tajik territory. Various types of drugs were seized by the Drug Control Agency and Russian Federal Border Service Group in Tajikistan, which were the main recipients of the support provided by the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. The Office, jointly with the Tajik Drug Control Agency, has also promoted activities related to raising awareness about drugs, such as sports events, music shows and drawing competitions among school children. New regional initiatives of the Office, such as precursors control in Central Asia, drug demand reduction, projects on organized crime and activities within the global legal assistance programme have also commenced in Tajikistan.

V. Assistance provided by Member States

58. Member States provided US$ 25.03 million in response to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for 2000. Major donors include the European Commission Humanitarian Office, the United States of America, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Contributions outside the framework of the consolidated appeal, as reported by donors and agencies to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, amounted to US$ 3.8 million. In addition, the World Bank allocated US$ 25.9 million in the form of credit and grants to support policy-based lending, agriculture, social sectors and minor projects of technical assistance. At the World Bank-led Consultative Group meeting held at Tokyo on 16 May 2001, donor Governments pledged US$ 439 million in support of the economic reform and investment programmes in Tajikistan for the biennium 2001-2002. In 2000, the Asian Development Bank allocated US$ 54 million to support power and road reconstruction in Tajikistan. The Economic Commission Humanitarian Office has pledged some euros 11 million for Tajikistan in support of humanitarian and rehabilitation activities for a period of 12 months beginning from May 2001.

59. The United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan for 2001 seeks a total of US$ 82 million for programmes in the sectors of food security, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education, reintegration, coordination and security. The Appeal covers all drought-related emergency food needs that were included in the United Nations inter-agency donor alert for drought in Tajikistan, which covered the period from 15 September 2000 to 31 July 2001. As at 30 June 2001, some US$ 25 million had been contributed by the international community towards the 2001 Appeal, the bulk of which is food aid to WFP. Other important sectors, such as health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, are severely under funded.

VI. Observations

60. Following the parliamentary elections and establishment of new governmental structures, the security environment has improved significantly over the past year but remains precarious. There has been only limited progress made in the social and economic sectors of the country; with the continuing drought and lack of income opportunities, living conditions in Tajikistan remain at the level of the world's lowest income countries. The efforts of the Government and the assistance provided by the United Nations system and its partners prevented a humanitarian tragedy that could have emerged as a consequence of the drought. However, while food aid has been provided to address the needs of the affected population, access to other important social services, such as health, water and sanitation and education, was severely limited as the overall economic and social conditions deteriorated further under the impact of the drought. With the resources available, humanitarian agencies have made persistent efforts to deliver relief assistance in a way that promotes self-reliance and contributes to economic recovery. However, needs are now so urgent and severe that any interruption of relief assistance would be catastrophic.

61. The United Nations humanitarian strategy in the 2001 Consolidated Appeal specifically focuses on needs in the transitional period. While most

programmes are aimed at addressing the consequences of drought and other emergency needs, some others are aimed at a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and sustainable development. Most of the projects include medium-term to longer-term objectives, in addition to immediate ones. The United Nations in Tajikistan is now re-evaluating its activities in order to prepare a common humanitarian strategy for 2002 that would support the relief and recovery operations during this transitional period, with a major focus on promoting self-reliance and sustainable development. In addition, UNTOP is planning to lead the development of a peace-building strategy that would provide an overall framework for the United Nations system to address the root causes of conflict and economic destitution in the country.

62. Against the background of the widely recognized importance of humanitarian assistance in maintaining and consolidating the achievements of the peace-building efforts, the donor response to the 2001 Appeal has been significantly low. Entire sectors, such as health, education and water and sanitation, remained severely underfunded. It is extremely important to create employment and income opportunities, especially for demobilized fighters, and at the same time to ensure an urgent and adequate response to the consequences of the current drought. The United Nations, at this delicate juncture in Tajikistan, can continue to play a critical role in supporting post-conflict peace-building, as long as funding continues to be provided.

63. The prolonged drought, the influence of drug trafficking, the regional political situation and political instability are powerful arguments for continued support for Tajikistan. The provision of increased humanitarian and development assistance is crucial to maintaining and strengthening the achievements of the United Nations post-conflict peace-building efforts and to keeping Tajikistan on the road to stabilization, democratic development and economic reform. I would therefore appeal to donors to contribute generously to the humanitarian, development and peacekeeping activities of the United Nations system and its partners in Tajikistan, in particular the programmes outlined in the 2001 Consolidated Appeal.

Notes

[1] UNESCO Publishing, Paris, 2000.